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By J.W. MACKAIL

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BY

J. W. MACKAIL

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I am she whose hands are strong and her eyes blinded
And lips athirst,
Till upon the night of nations many-minded
One bright day burst.

SWINBURNE, *A Litany of Nations* (1868).

Poor and abundant,
Down-trodden and almighty,
Art thou, our Mother Russia.

NEKRÁSOV, *Who is Happy in Russia?* (1873).

# RUSSIA'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

RUSSIA is, for the mass of people in England, an unknown country. It is separated in many ways: by distance, by language, by social organisation and habits. It is at the other end of Europe, so that the journey from one country to the other is long, expensive, and rather laborious. Not only the language, but even the alphabet is different from ours, and the ways of common life are in many respects strange, and take some pains to understand. To these difficulties in the way of intercourse has to be added, not only the national English dislike of foreigners, but the alienation caused by past hostility. The Crimean War, one of the greatest blunders of English statesmanship, drove a wedge between the two nations just when they might have begun to understand one another. Then there followed a long period of jealousies over our Indian frontier and conflicting interests in South-Eastern Europe. Twice we were on the brink of war with Russia, once over Constantinople in 1877-78, and again over Afghanistan in 1884-85. Then the Franco-Russian Alliance was formed at a time when Great Britain was on uneasy and almost hostile terms with France. It is only in recent years that we have come to regard Russia as a neighbour and tried to understand the Russian nation and the Russian life.

Instances of the greatness of our ignorance are the common beliefs that the Russians are an Asiatic race, and that they speak a barbarous language. The facts are quite the contrary. The Slavs are.

like ourselves, pure Aryans; they are cousins of the Latins and the Celts and the Germans, and have exactly the same claim as these other nations to be counted European. The countries occupied by them used at one time to extend all over Northern Germany as far west as the Elbe, and even now there are Slav peoples in large numbers in the heart of Central Europe. So, too, about their language. The Russian language, which is spoken (with some varieties of dialect) by more than 100,000,000 people, is one of the richest and noblest of human languages. It provides as valuable a mental discipline as any other modern language, perhaps even as Greek or Latin, and it is a language in which many great works of literature, as we shall see later, have been written.

Not only is there great ignorance of Russia in England, but, as always is the result of ignorance, great misunderstanding. The popular notions about Russia are not only imperfect but absurd. They are derived partly from a distorted legend of the Crimean War, partly from sympathy with nationalities or causes which the Russian Government has treated badly, and very largely from fiction. This last is not even Russian fiction, but the fiction of English or French writers who were wholly ignorant of Russia. The Russian nobleman, the Russian spy, the Russian conspirator, as they are popularly conceived, are figures of melodrama or of comic opera, not of actual life. To novel writers Russia has been a happy hunting ground, where they could lay on their colours as they chose and make scenes as fantastic as those of the Arabian Nights.

Broadly, the impression produced by this combined ignorance and misconception is that not of a nation, still less of a nation working together with others for the objects and ideals of civilisation. It is of a vast, shapeless mass of barbarism tyrannised over by a small governing class which itself

is half barbarous. It is of a people non-European in the sense in which Europe means freedom, order, the conquest of nature, and the progress of humanity. Russia is fancied as a clog, if not a menace, to the general movement of progress—affording, indeed, a market for our goods and sending us in return its wheat and timber and petroleum, but producing nothing else of human service; doing little or nothing in thought or art, in knowledge, in organisation of the higher life.

Those who know something of Russia know that this popular view is entirely wrong. And like all great errors about the facts of life, it is actively mischievous. We shall never be in good and useful relations with any nation, or with any body of our fellow men, until we take some pains to understand them and to know what they really are, what they think, what they create, what they seek to attain. This knowledge is equally essential whether we regard them as our friends or as our enemies. Without understanding based on facts, liking or dislike, friendliness or enmity rest on mere accident or prejudice. The Russians are different from us, but they are like us, and we have a great deal in common.

It is equally wrong and equally foolish to misconceive or to ignore or to despise what any nation, be that nation France or Germany or Russia, has done in the world and for the world. Great harm was done in England for generations by our old traditional dislike of France. Our ancient contempt for Germany as a nation of professors and of dreamers, tied down by feudalism and pedantry, has had in modern times a sharp awakening. But though we understand France and Germany now better than we once did, we have not yet lost the spirit of insular ignorance and prejudice in which those old misunderstandings arose. Now this spirit, whether it be directed towards Russians or towards Prussians,

is disastrous in its effects upon our whole public policy, upon our own national character, and, which is much more important, upon the common progress and common welfare of mankind.

If we were asked, What is the place that Great Britain occupies in the world? what she has given to mankind, and what is the debt which mankind owes to her? we might point to the great empire gradually put together, and now held together by goodwill, by a sense of common interest, of friendship, and of kinship; or to the achievements of Great Britain in industry and commerce and invention, and their effect in increasing the sum of human wealth and of human power over nature; or to her success in establishing, not merely as an ideal, but as a thing which actually works, the habit of self-government and the freedom of opinion. Or we might point to those national qualities, persistent through political and social changes, which are the basis of daily life: we might speak with Burke of the piety, integrity, good nature, and good humour which underlie the English character, and claim that they contribute certain elements towards a standard of goodness for the whole of mankind. Or once more, we might point to what Great Britain has done in the things of the mind, in letters, in science, and in art.

It is this last matter which is most universal in its appeal to the world, and which remains permanently, after hundreds or thousands of years have passed, as the greatest glory of any nation. It is a source of national pride, or rather we might say an impulse towards national endeavour, to realise in these things of the mind the possession of a great inheritance and to feel that we must be worthy of it.

In this sphere of things of the mind a country is known by its great names. It takes its place in the world in virtue of what its great writers, artists,

or investigators have thought and written and done. And its actual present contribution to this common stock is what such men are now doing; that is to say, the worth and importance of the literature, the art, and the science which it is now producing.

Thus the gift of England to the human race, the debt owed to her by them, would be indicated, in this way of regarding the matter, by the names of Shakespeare and Milton, of Newton and Darwin, of Kelvin and Lister, with hundreds of others who in all the arts and sciences have won distinction and benefited mankind. Such names represent the gift that England has given to the world. The gift she is now giving is represented by many living names in all these fields. Everyone has some list in his own mind of those who are now handing on the lamp from one generation to another.

The perpetual task of mankind is to attack a problem or a mass of problems which is ever new and ever urgent. Briefly, the task may be stated thus. It is concerned with production and with distribution; it is a task of creating and a task of handling. In the sphere of politics, that task is the creation and distribution of order, freedom, and equality. In the sphere of material things it is the creation and distribution of wealth, through the machinery of invention, industry, commerce, and social organisation. In the spiritual sphere, represented by literature, art, science, and history, it is the creation and distribution of truth and beauty. The object of all alike is human well-being. It is the last of them which is dealt with here.

That the task of the human race is concerned with distribution as well as creation involves a vital point with regard to the arts and sciences, no less than with regard to other things. This point is, how far art, literature, and science are not merely the occupation of a few gifted men among themselves, and confined in their influence to narrow boundaries, but act

vitally on the soul and life of a nation, and through it on the commonwealth of the nations. For Wordsworth's phrase of " joy in widest commonalty spread " is true of intellectual things no less than it is true of material comfort or of a sound social structure. Of truth and beauty, no less than of wealth and freedom, it may be said that they are not realised until they are produced, maintained, and spread abroad, by the people for the people.

What follows does not profess to be a complete account. It is necessarily incomplete. It does not deal, for instance, with all the kinds of literature, or with all the branches of physical and mental science. It takes the things which are most obviously important, and which are to a large extent an index to the rest. It is a setting forth under these conditions, and in a very brief summary, of what Russia has contributed in letters, art, and science to the progress of the world, and to the enrichment of life.

## I.

## LITERATURE

In any account of Russian literature, two kinds of it have to be considered which are historically separate, though the one to some extent grew out of and is founded upon the other. There is the early popular literature of tales, ballads, and poems which grew up among the people, was handed down by memory, and very often was not committed to writing at all until modern times. There is also the regular literature of books, which begins when language has been studied as an art and reduced to rules. This latter is the form which literature takes in modern times. In both forms the record of Russia is extraordinarily rich.

From very early times, Russian as a spoken

language produced a copious treasure of tales and ballads, epics and songs. The old Russian fairy tales now recovered and written down are of the highest rank in their wealth of fancy, their freshness, and beauty. The " epic songs " or " heroic songs " going back to the early Middle Ages, from the 10th to the 13th century, are no less important. They have been collected and printed in modern times by Danilev, Rybnikov, Sakharov, and many others. They are not only of immense historical interest, but reveal a power of imagination and expression not excelled by anything produced in Western Europe. To the same period belonged the prose epics, nearly all now lost. One of these, *The Raid of Prince Igor*, was rediscovered in 1795 ; and both in matter and style it is a masterpiece, to be set alongside of the French *Chanson de Roland* or the great Icelandic Sagas. The production of this early popular literature received a severe check from the conquest of Southern Russia by the Mongols (a race akin to the Huns) in the 13th century. Ages of devastation followed, during which Russia sank back into something approaching barbarism. But the instinct for the popular epic survived, and put forth fresh and vigorous growths during the period which was in England that of Shakespeare and Milton.

Regular Russian literature, in the modern sense of the term, is hardly more than a century old. It began in the result partly of the introduction of Western education, partly of the rediscovery of their own older literature. Both took effect when the Russian Empire had been consolidated in the 18th century. Lomonosov, by his work on the Russian language, paved the way for style and composition. He was a man of immense learning, and the University of Moscow was founded (1755) under his influence. At first the books written were in the French manner, which was then dominant

in Europe. The great impulse towards a truly national Russian literature was given by the national war of 1812, and the first really great work which that impulse produced was Karamzin's *History of Russia,* published in the year after Waterloo. For its period it was a remarkable achievement merely as history, but its chief importance was in its larger aspect as literature. It established interest among the educated classes in the history of their own country, and it also established Russian prose as a fine art, and became a classic on its literary merit. About the same time there were writing a number of poets who, though not of the first rank, helped to do for verse what Karamzin had done for prose.

All this work was pioneering in unexplored regions. It may help us to understand Russian literature to think of it as like English literature starting with Scott and Byron if these authors had had no predecessors except the ballads, chronicles, and romances of the Middle Ages, and if in the beginning of the 19th century they had had to make their language as well as write in it.

The new movement rapidly bore fruit, and it took shape in the works of Pushkin, the real founder of modern Russian literature. He was both a poet and a prose writer of the romantic school; he corresponds broadly to both Scott and Byron in this country. He was much influenced by Shakespeare, but his genius was quite individual and also quite national. His narrative poem, *Evgeny Onegin,* his historical tragedy, *Boris Godunov,* and his prose stories of Russian life are all masterpieces. He remains not only a founder but a model. He was more of an artist than a thinker, but his writings have a purity and sincerity of the highest and most lasting value. Like Scott, he was a romantic who did not lose touch with reality, and who gave voice in his writings to the life of his nation. Through him Russian literature was able to claim a place

with French and German, English and Italian, among the national literatures of Europe.

That claim was established, that place secured, by the three great imaginative writers of the next generation. Pushkin and his contemporaries, indeed, have only become known largely outside of Russia in the reflected light of those successors, who compelled the attention and won the admiration of the whole world. Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy are by common consent among the greatest writers of all ages and countries. It would be needless to labour a point which no one would deny. Taken together, they sum up a production comparable in largeness, force, and vital truth to those of Elizabethan or Victorian England. Of this great trinity but few words need be said.

Turgenev is above all things a consummate artist. For easy and complete mastery of his art he stands at the head of all European writers of his time. His early training was largely German, and afterwards he lived much in France ; and so he writes of Russian life from a broad European point of view, and his fame became as great throughout Europe as it was in his own country. Through him Europe came for the first time, with a shock of surprise and admiration, into contact with the Russian soul. Writers so distinguished as George Sand and Flaubert acknowledged him as their master. In *Dmitri Rudin, Fathers and Sons,* and other works hardly less famous, he combined truth to nature with purity of outline and sense of proportion, and with complete harmony between thought and expression. His work is almost unequalled for perfection of style and for restrained power ; Taine hardly went beyond what most would admit, when he said that there had been nothing like it since Sophocles.

He wrote of a life which was rapidly becoming a life of the past ; in his last important work, *Virgin Soil,* he is seen trying, in some perplexity, to keep

pace with the movements of a new generation. His fame is not so great now as it was thirty years ago, when he had a position, somewhat like Tennyson in England, of unquestioned supremacy. But the strength and charm, the insight and suavity of his art still remain ; and his work stands secure, not only by its beauty but by its strength and truth. In his self-imposed exile he remained a patriot. The Russian language was to him a symbol of Russian life. " When I fall into despair," he wrote, " at the " sight of all that is being done at home, I cannot " but believe that it is to a great people that such " a language has been given."

Turgenev represents the Russia of the older time ; Dostoyevsky represents, in strong contrast, the growth, the unrest, and the agonies of the new democracy. His scenes of life are the garret and the street, with their monotony of poverty and suffering. He cannot be read for amusement ; his books are disquieting and distressing, but compelling in their power and truth. The typical Russian qualities of patience and humility became in him a passion, almost a fever. His *Crime and Punishment* had an effect, in Russia and throughout Europe, as great as that of Richardson's *Clarissa* a century before. They are alike in their slow inevitable movement, their crushing truth, their insight into the dark places of the human soul, and the way in which they work out, relentlessly and in cruel detail, the doctrine of expiation through suffering. Later books, *The Idiot, Devils, The Brothers Karamazov*, are no less powerful and no less awful. The image of life which he places before us would be horrible but for the sense throughout it all of controlling and overwhelming pity. He searches for the soul of goodness in evil, and so finally leaves a message of dim hope.

Tolstoy was probably the most remarkable single figure in the world of his time. He is the one

Russian writer whose name, and some at least of whose works, are known everywhere. Turgenev is a supreme artist; Dostoyevsky rejects art in his consuming passion for humanity; with Tolstoy, "art happens," he cannot help being a great artist. No modern writer, hardly any one ancient or modern, has approached him in two things. One of these is his power of creating people and situations that are not so much like life as they are life itself. The other is his power of stirring thought and awakening conscience by going straight to the heart of things, and to the human heart itself. In his narrative, one feels not only that things happened so, but that they could not have happened otherwise; it is as though Nature herself took the pen and wrote for him. This is the effect produced by all his work; alike in the vivid descriptive work of his earlier years, like *The Cossacks* and *Sevastopol;* or in his vast historical epic of *War and Peace,* which paints, or rather sets out in the solid, in flesh and blood, a whole civilisation, and a whole generation of the world's history; or in *Anna Karenina,* where Russian society comes to life on a large canvas; or in his autobiographic writings, like *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth;* or in those exquisite short stories, like *What Men Live by, Master and Man, The Two Pilgrims, Where Love is, there God is also,* where he gives us life in its simplest elements, among poor peasants and artisans, and which are full of infinite fragrance and beauty, of incomparable truth and tenderness and power.

He thought little of his own art, for he was too deeply concerned with life, with religion, and with the salvation of mankind, to care about other things. Fame came to him against his will. In his later years, his house at Yasnaya Polyana became a place of pilgrimage from all Europe, like Ferney in the old age of Voltaire, like Weimar in the old age of Goethe. He was not only an artist but a prophet,

and not only an artist and a prophet but a child, with the child's terrible simplicity and insight. In all these qualities he is unique, but yet characteristically Russian.

All the three were alike in their passionate love of Russia, as well as in their power of interpreting Russia to mankind. But their love of Russia worked out differently. The patriotism of Turgenev reached out towards accepting and assimilating the influences of the West. That of Dostoyevsky rebelled against these influences ; it was more self-confined, but more intense. That of Tolstoy was not patriotism at all in the ordinary sense ; his love of Russia was an instinct, and he wrote of Russia because he found in it a symbol of the whole of humanity. And so he drew more and more from the life of the Russian peasantry (who are nine-tenths of the nation), because in them he found the nearest approach to practical Christianity, to the attitude of little children which is inculcated by the Gospel, and in which he discerned the secret of life.

These three great writers tower up among a mass of others, who, by themselves, would make Russian literature remarkable. Most of them are hardly known in England except among Russian scholars, and it would be idle to give a long list of mere names, but a few of the more outstanding poets and prose authors may be mentioned. In prose we have to take special note of Gogol, the novelist and playwright, who has been called the Russian Dickens ; he was the founder of realism in Russian literature, and his work is full of fun and humour. These qualities are rather rare in Russian art, which is habitually serious—sometimes almost oppressively so to the Western mind. In them he is akin to English writers. The French critic, Prosper Mérimée, put this in a pointed way when he called him " one of the best English humorists." With him may be named Belinsky, the creator of Russian literary

criticism, who was powerful in moulding the great generation of Russian writers; Solovev, a brilliant essayist and thinker; and Yakovlev (better known by his maternal name of Herzen), a Christian Socialist whose influence was immense in directions that he neither desired nor foresaw, and who is known in literature by his brilliant Memoirs. Three more have been, in part, translated into English, and are better known: Chekhov, the literary descendant of Turgenev, who drew Russian middle-class life with great accuracy and also with a sense of humour; Gorky, "the Russian Kipling," who introduced a fresh naturalism into Russian letters; and Merezhkovsky, the author of powerful works of historical fiction.

In poetry likewise may be named Krylov the fabulist, who, before Pushkin, gave the first impulse to national self-expression; Lermontov, a poet of the school of Byron, but with a lyrical gift akin to that of Shelley; Koltsov, "the Russian Burns"; the delicate and charming lyrics of Alexis Tolstoy; and Nekrásov, the most popular in Russia of all their poets. Nekrásov might be compared to Longfellow in his simplicity and direct appeal to ordinary people; but he is in the strongest contrast to Longfellow's cheerful serenity, for his poetry, in its uncompromising realism, is often bitter, and nearly always full of gloom. Yet this temper issued finally in enthusiasm for the people and faith in their ultimate victory.

At the present time, as is natural and inevitable, Russian literature seems to be in a time of slack water after the period of the great writers. But it is full of the stirrings of fresh life. As in England, there is large and eager production, manifold experiment, belief in the power of literature to interpret life; and this gives hope, in both countries, of a new birth and another great age.

## MUSIC

The development of Russian music affords a close and interesting parallel to the development of Russian literature. Music and song are the natural gift of the Slavonic race. It was so in ancient times and is so now. All travellers in Russia are struck by the beauty and skill of the untaught singing heard everywhere, from the mouths of soldiers or workmen or peasants. This music is based on a natural scale and is harmonised, when sung by several voices, by a sort of popular counterpoint. The melodies of Russia have an unusual fascination. This native music was long hindered in its development by the strong ecclesiastical tradition of the Russian Church, which was rootedly conservative. When the scientific study of music was taken up in the 18th century, the influence of Italian music was dominant throughout Europe. Famous Italian composers like Paisiello, Galuppi, and Cimarosa paid long visits to Russia; they were in great favour at the Court, and set the fashion throughout the country, so that the native music fell into neglect. It was revived in the great wave of patriotic enthusiasm a hundred years ago, and came to its own in the work of Glinka.

Glinka was a contemporary of Pushkin, and their work is intimately connected, for it represents a common national development on parallel lines. His genius created a national idiom for musical expression. In his famous opera, *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), he concentrated the native musical substance and enlarged it to a universal human appeal. This movement was continued by Dargomyzhsky, who worked on much the same lines as Wagner, but quite independently of him. It is to Dargomyzhsky that we owe the famous sentence, "I want the note to be the direct equivalent of the

word." Glinka and Dargomyzhsky gave between them the lyrical idealism and the dramatic truth which are the scope and aim of music.

In the next generation their work bore fruit in the group of great Russian composers who are now recognised as amongst the most important in the history of the modern art. They made Russian music at once national and universal. It is only in recent years that their achievement has been fully realised. The two Russian musicians whose work is even now best known in England, Rubinstein and Chaikovsky (his name is generally spelled Tschaikowsky on our musical programmes and in Western editions of his compositions) are the least distinctively Russian. Rubinstein won his fame throughout Europe less as a musician than as a brilliant pianist. Chaikovsky's emotional and subjective art is essentially Western, or rather cosmopolitan, and this is so even when, as in his opera of *Evgeny Onegin*, he takes his sources from Russian literature and uses national Russian musical motifs. But we have lately come to know the splendid and intimately Russian music of Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

It came as a revelation, and made us realise that here we have a new birth which has enriched the art, has given it deeper truth and fresh beauty. Their motto was to make art the handmaid of humanity, to " go to the people, seek truth, and the true purpose of life." " To feed upon humanity," Mussorgsky wrote, " is the whole problem of art." In his two greatest works, *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*, he realised his ideal. Alongside of him, and working in the same spirit, came the two others. Borodin, the author of *Prince Igor*, was a musician with less of tragic intensity but more of serene beauty. Rimsky-Korsakov was the most accomplished musician of the three, and had a special genius for the expression of strong colour

and exuberant vitality. In his *Pskovityanka*, known in England under the name of *Ivan the Terrible*, and his *Golden Cock*, based on a prose tale of Pushkin's, he gave new life to the national art over a wide range of pathos and humour, profound tragedy and brilliant fancy. In all these three musicians what is remarkable is their intense nationality, their wide humanity, and their clear, direct vision. Through their work Russian music has definitely taken a place in the great art of the world.

These names, and those of other distinguished contemporaries, represent, so far, the golden age of Russian music. But that age is being continued in the generation of living musicians, among whom may be mentioned the names of Rakhmaninov, Glazunov, Stravinsky, and Skryabin. They are continuing to produce music of a type less intimately national, but of great beauty and value. As in literature, however, the age of the giants has been succeeded for a time by a period of temporary reaction, and a certain sense of fatigue. The multiplication through Russia of schools of music and of orchestras has, like the diffusion of education, its own dangers. But in both arts there is the consciousness of great things actually achieved; there is wide study and appreciation of the masters; and there is the full realisation of both literature and music as functions of national life, art by the people and for the people.

These facts give much promise and high hopes for the future. No modern music is so powerful as the Russian in its appeal to elementary human instincts, so large and direct, so popular in the best sense of that word. Knowledge of it is now steadily increasing in the west. Selected compositions and songs by Russian composers are widely accessible, and they are helping in England very greatly towards the spread of really good and vital music.

## ART

Art is the application of beauty to life. But in its current sense it is used with a more special meaning to cover broadly two fields: first, that of painting, sculpture, and architecture; and secondly, that of all those subsidiary arts and crafts which use form and colour towards design and decoration.

In the mistress arts there is no great Russian school comparable, for instance, to the Italian, Dutch, English, and Flemish schools of painting, to the French Gothic and Italian Renaissance schools of architecture, or to the great achievements of more than one western nation in sculpture. There are no Russian names to set beside those of Raphael and Titian and Velasquez, of Van Eyck or Memling or Rembrandt, of Donatello and Michael Angelo, of the architects who built Santa Sofia, Reims and Chartres, the Duomo of Florence, the Abbey Church of Westminster, or the Cathedral of St. Paul's. The circumstances of Russia during the Middle Ages, and long afterwards, did not allow of such development. The country was too poor and too much oppressed by foreign invasions. There has been, indeed, in Russia a continuous tradition of architecture derived from Byzantine sources, and it has resulted in churches and other buildings, imposing in design and gorgeous in their brilliant colouring, but the Russian Church always discountenanced sculpture, and strove to confine painting to a rigid convention.

In more modern times Russian artists have learned and followed the art as it had been developed by the masters of Western Europe. The foundation of the Imperial Academy of Arts in 1757 (ten years earlier than our own Royal Academy) only confirmed the prevalence of academic painting. The movement of the 19th century went astray in two directions, either by being "art with a purpose," painting

which was meant to convey some direct moral lesson, or by restricting its aim to the mere clever record of facts—neither of which is really art at all.

There is abundant technical skill among Russian art students, and there have been good Russian painters: Repin, the painter of some striking historical pieces; the landscapist Shishkin, who really felt and interpreted the aspects of nature in Russia; Aivazovsky, the marine painter (in the Black Sea Russia possesses almost an ocean of her own); and Vasnetsov, who has attempted to give a new life and a deeper meaning to the traditional religious art of his country. The work of Vereshchagin is known in Europe for its moral fervour, as an arraignment and exposure of militarism, more than for its artistic quality, which is nevertheless considerable. But on the whole these and other Russian painters belong to a European rather than to a Russian movement, and to one or another of the modern schools which have little distinctive national quality. And the middle classes in Russia are very like our own in their sense, or rather want of sense, for works of art. But among these modern schools of painting — the realists, the impressionists, the symbolists, and all the rest—one which has taken special hold of the younger generation of Russian painters is that of the mystics, those who feel the mystery of beauty and apply their modern technique to the expression of ancient faith. This is a type of art which appeals to the eyes and hearts of simple people as well as to the trained intelligence.

Russian sculpture, even more than Russian painting, is an art belonging only to the last century, and subject to the cosmopolitan influences which have from time to time been prevalent. But in this art also, the idealised work of sculptors like Kamensky and Antokolsky, and the portrait sculpture of Elias Ginsburg, take an honourable place among the productions of their period.

It is on the side of popular art that Russia has enriched the common store from resources of national genius. This art is the work, not of great individual artists, but of a really great feeling for art diffused throughout the people. This is so particularly as regards the household arts, that is to say the application of beauty to the things of common life. In this respect Russia still retains much of what was best in the Middle Ages. The native instinct here, as in other countries, has been checked and sometimes nearly killed by industrialisation, by the victory of the factory and the machine, but it is still living, and is capable of a great revival.

Much of this domestic art now finds its way to this country. It consists mainly of two things, the application of design and ornament to wood, and their application to textiles, the former being the native birth of the forest regions, the latter of the agricultural flax-growing districts. Russian carving is inexhaustible in design and full of vitality. The figures and patterns carved by the peasantry are in the fullest sense art by the people, and for the people ; they are work done with pleasure and done for the sake of the pleasure which it gives. Their figure carving has the full mediæval life and charm. Design is lavished on the carving of the house, as in boards and cornices ; of furniture, as tables, chairs, cupboards, and chests ; and of objects of common use, such as salt boxes, distaffs, washer-women's beetles, bowls, and mugs. So, too, design is applied lavishly in form and colour to common woven fabrics, such as curtains and towels, shirts, aprons, and belts.

The embroidery and drawn thread work of Russia is remarkably fine, and in the most remote districts there is a very fine tradition of work in enamelled metal and in lacquer. Special note should be taken of the beauty of Russian toys. For a nation's toys are no slight index to its civilisation in the most

human sense of the word. For beauty and imagination and sense of life, Russian toys are unequalled in Europe ; and the same may be said of many of the Russian picture-books. Nor is peasant art in Russia less remarkable when applied to other substances, such as ornamented leather, enamelled bricks and tiles, and earthenware. In these, as in their wood carving and in their fabrics, the Russians delight in bright strong colour. The native unsophisticated colour-sense is stronger in Russia than in any other European countries. In their use of reds, and also of blues and greens, they are masterly. In any general revivification of popular art, we must look to Russia for strong impulse and for vital assistance.

The convergence of the separate arts into a single organic whole was very remarkably shown in the productions of the Russian Opera in London in the years 1913-14. Hardly less delightful in these than the music and singing, and the superb acting, were the architectural backgrounds, the massing and disposition of the performers and the harmonious glowing brilliance of the costumes. Throughout the whole, and giving it cumulative effect, was just this diffused sense of beauty, and instinctive skill in applying it harmoniously. Not only on the musical side, but in its whole appeal through the senses to the intellect and imagination, it was a great achievement and an equally great stimulus. For the first time in its history, this complex form of art was seen, under the Russian genius, ceasing to be artificial and becoming real. It was no longer a pretence art existing for the sake of displaying the cleverness of the performers, but a true art for the sake of which the performers existed, and in which they were doing their natural work. The same is true of the art of choral dancing. Ballet, as understood and practised in Europe, had been little more than a soulless or corrupt display. In Russian hands it

has been made a serious art, inspired by active imagination, and effecting the realisation of beauty through common effort. It has been said quite justly of Russian literary and dramatic masterpieces that in them the hero is not so much this or that individual, as the whole people; and this holds good of their art as well. It is national, and popular, in the highest sense.

## THE DRAMA

Dramatic production is a mixed art. It contains the elements of literature, music, the rhythm of speech and movement, form, colour, and decoration. Of all the arts, it is probably the most powerful, as it is certainly the widest, in its appeal. For it affects all the senses, it gives scope to all the intelligence, and through both it acts very powerfully on the feelings and the imagination. The Russian drama is of European importance; and quite recently a Russian movement has begun a revolution in the theatre and in all the arts connected with it.

The first Russian theatre was started as long ago as 1703, and the first Russian opera-house not many years later. But native Russian drama begins definitely in 1831, the date of production of a comedy and a tragedy, both of first-rate excellence, Griboyedov's *The Misfortune of Being Clever*, and Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*. There has been a succession of dramatists ever since. Gogol's satirical comedy of *The Inspector-General* still remains a classic and a popular favourite. Both Turgenev and Tolstoy wrote plays in which their genius manifests itself no less than in their other writings. Ostrovsky introduced modern "realistic" drama into Russia a generation before it appeared in the West; his plays are still frequently produced. The production of dramatic works in recent years is large; and

though there may be noted in many of them the tendency to joylessness and to representation of the greyer aspects of life which is so marked in our own modern dramatists, their quality is often high. The plays of Chekhov, produced in the Arts Theatre at Moscow, mark a new stage in the development of the drama through their subtlety, delicacy, and truth to life. Wonderful work has been done at that theatre in all branches of the dramatic art during the last fifteen years. A very brief account of it will be the best way of showing what Russia has been doing for the world in this complex and difficult art, so often turned to base uses, and so great in its influence, whether for good or evil.

This enterprise has brought about a revolution in the methods of acting and staging, and what is even more important, it seems to have brought about a revolution in the attitude of the public towards the theatre. It was started by two men, Stanislavsky and Danchenko. Their first achievement was the " discovery " of Chekhov. His play, *The Seagull,* had been coldly received at Petrograd. Stanislavsky, bringing his sympathetic understanding to bear upon this essentially new thing in drama, re-staged it in Moscow. The combination of his art and Chekhov's, the interpretation and creation so brilliantly blended, seem to have achieved at a stroke that perfection which is still the distinguishing mark of the Arts Theatre's work. Other theatres have their own virtues, courage, invention, strength, resource. But as the acted drama has to work in that most fallible and unaccountable medium, the human actor, the margin of error and failure, even in the best performances, must be enormous. In the Moscow Arts Theatre this difficulty seems to be conquered. To Stanislavsky acting is a serious art. He works out its principles; he instructs his company and his pupils, not in its tricks, but in its ethics. He does not try to produce so many plays

in the year, or such and such a play by a certain date. Work is put into preparation; when he is satisfied with it it is given to the public; if he is not satisfied the public never sees it at all.

Though there is no particular virtue in taking a long time over anything if you can get the same result in a short time, it is a great virtue, and is the unique distinction of this theatre, that the artistic achievement is put first, and, until that has been accomplished, other considerations nowhere. Chekhov's later and maturer dramatic work, *The Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Cherry Orchard*, has all been written for and produced at this theatre. Both the plays and their stage-interpretation are typically Russian, but they supply a model for all theatrical work. When you watch a performance there you hardly ask whether such and such an actor is doing the thing well or not. You accept without question that this is what the man or woman was like, that this is how they lived and breathed, quite unconsciously.

Almost as remarkable as the company is the audience. Their manners are perfect; they seldom applaud, and if anyone attempted to interrupt the play by doing so he would probably be requested to leave. They seem never to arrive late, and if they do they have to stop outside. Nor is there any of that air of the theatre being a place where disreputable people on one side of the curtain are paid to tickle the senses of idle merry-makers on the other. To the Russian public the theatre takes its place quite simply and sensibly among all the other arts.

"For seven years," one is told, "the Arts Theatre did not pay its way, and those who cared gave money freely that it might continue its work without lowering its ideals. Now it is always full, and the people concerned make a respectable living out of it. Beyond that no one seems to associate its success with money-making at all."

## II.

So far we have been speaking of Russian art and letters, and in doing so it has been kept in view that these are Russian in the fullest sense ; that is, that they are not only produced by writers and artists who happened to be Russians, but represent the character and the creative instinct of a nation. When we turn from the arts to the sciences this does not hold good quite so fully. For science is a matter more largely of pure intellect, and not so much of temperament or character. It is, in its nature, less local or national than art. But in the application of science, and in the method of handling the same material, national genius comes out ; and there are nations, too, which seem to have a special capacity for certain sciences ; thus the French have what may be almost called a national genius for mathematics. Also science, at its highest, is a matter not merely of intellect, but of imaginative power.

Thus while science is in some sense international, yet the greatness of any country in science can be measured, partly by the number of great scientists which it has produced, partly by the energy which it puts into the pursuit of knowledge, and partly by its success in organising the co-operation of research and in diffusing intellectual interest widely. One source of greatness in any nation is its belief in knowledge ; one claim to distinction is the amount of knowledge it has contributed to the common stock ; one title of honour for it is the roll of its great scientific names. Newton and Darwin are part of the glory of England ; Humboldt and Virchow of Germany ; Laplace, Lavoisier, Pasteur, of France. Russia also has its organised study of science, its co-operative energy in the pursuit of scientific truth, and its great scientific names, some of them in the front rank of the whole world.

The gift of Russia to the world in the sphere of science has developed during the last fifty years. Although the Imperial Academy of Science in Petrograd was founded as far back as 1725, Russian work in science hardly made itself felt before the middle of the 19th century. From this time, however, Russian scientific men have more than played their part in the peaceful competition among nations for the advancement of knowledge. Nor have they confined themselves to what we may call the spade work of science—the careful investigation of phenomena and the amassing of new facts. From the commencement of their activity they have produced men who could act as pioneers in the opening up of new lines of thought, and could show the way of attack into new realms of the unknown.

One cannot help being struck with a marked similarity between the history of science in Russia and that in our own country. Whereas in central Europe scientific advance has been largely effected by the organised activity of numerous bodies of workers carrying out with docility the instructions of their learned chiefs, our glory in England is the possession of a constant succession of great men, working alone for the most part, but each by his originality diverting and directing the streams of thought and work not merely of such pupils as he might attract to himself, but of the whole world of science. So it is, too, in Russia, where among others of only less distinction than theirs, three men, Mendeleyev, Mechnikov, and Pavlov, have won world-wide fame, and are in the front rank of modern achievement. It may be that the intellectual barrier between Russia and Western Europe, raised by geographical remoteness and differences of language, confines our vision to the giants of the intellectual forest. But the broad fact is clear that Russia at the present time, as England in the past, while she possesses organised schools of science,

is especially fortunate in the production of great men of science.

It is impossible to give, in a few pages and in popular language, any adequate idea of the contributions of Russia to the advancement of science. But an attempt may be made to indicate something of what she has done in various fields, and to single out some of those names which have become as familiar to scientific men in this country as they are in their native land.

## MATHEMATICS

In Mathematics, "the mother of the sciences," Russian mathematicians have produced remarkable work, particularly in fields of mathematical research which involve subjects of general philosophic interest. The two names which stand highest are those of Lobachevsky and Minkovsky. These two investigators illustrate the type of bold originality which marks the Russian intellect. The former was the discoverer of the new non-Euclidean geometry which has revolutionised the science. When the Greeks made geometry into an exact science they founded it on certain axioms on which the whole of the reasoning rests. It was believed for centuries that no alternative set of axioms as to space was possible, and that accordingly in these we possessed an example of *a priori* knowledge about the external world. Lobachevsky showed that there was an alternative set of axioms inconsistent with those of Euclid, and that a possible system of geometrical truths results from them; and further, that experience only can decide which set is true for the physical universe. His work was the beginning of a revolution, not only in geometry, but in the philosophy of space.

Minkovsky is almost of equal importance in a later stage of the same revolution. The most recent speculations concerning matter and physical pheno-

mena, such as light, have led up to the theory that all physical phenomena are ultimately electrical, and to the modern theory of electrons, by which all matter is reduced to electricity. This means, among other things, that events are contemporaneous only as regards a single observer, and that another observer may see them in a different order, and this again leads directly to a philosophic question of the highest importance, " What is time ? " just as the other had done to the question, " What is space ? " In the discussion of the abstract problems which arise in this inquiry Minkovsky's work is the most brilliant which has been done.

Besides these important names, among many others in the science of mathematics are those of Imsheretsky, who did work on differential equations in regions previously untouched in Western Europe, of Sonin and Lyapunov in analysis, of Markov in the theory of numbers, and of Nekrasov in theoretical dynamics. Nor should it be forgotten that, a few years ago, scientific Europe was stirred with interest by the revelation of the remarkable genius of a Russian woman mathematician, Sonya Kovalevskaya.

## PHYSICAL SCIENCE

There are few branches of Physics which are not indebted to Russia for results of primary importance. Lebedev is a physicist of the first rank. To him we owe the detection, by means of most difficult and ingenious experiments, of the minute pressure exerted by light upon a reflecting surface. This research was a triumph of experimental skill and ingenuity. The confirmation by it of what had been predicted on theoretical grounds is a result of fundamental importance in electro-magnetic science, and has opened up a new line of research both in physics and in astronomy. As regards another equally important property of light, that of

producing well marked and most interesting electrical effects, the researches of Stoletov are of unsurpassed importance. The work of Colley on electric waves, of Borgmann on discharge through gases, of Egorov on spectroscopy, of Umov on light, to mention but a few of the names of Russian workers, shows with what vigour the science of physics is being pursued; and this conclusion is confirmed by the large numbers of able and enthusiastic young Russian physicists who are now at the beginning of their careers. Some English physicists have had special opportunity of appreciating the excellent work they have done in our own laboratories. It is significant of the place which Russia holds in the diffusion as well as the advancement of science, that the best text-book on physics produced in any country is that of a Russian, Hvolson; it has been translated into most European languages. It is remarkable alike for its completeness, its breadth of view, and its suggestiveness, and has been a great help and stimulus to workers and students throughout the world.

In astronomy Russia has taken an important place ever since Peter the Great built the Observatory at Petrograd, the most magnificent and the best equipped which then existed in Europe. The best observations of the transit of Venus in 1761 were made by Russian astronomers, who were distributed for this purpose all over the Empire. In the 19th century other observatories were founded; the central one, at Pulkovo, has been for eighty years one of the greatest observatories in the world, and of fundamental importance to science. In modern times particularly, high respect and gratitude are felt by astronomers to many of their Russian colleagues. We may note specially in the advances made by astronomical science the researches of Glasenapp and Kovalsky on double stars, of the Ceraskis on variable stars, and of Belopolsky in spectroscopic analysis.

Geographical exploration and research have been pursued actively in Russia since the 17th century, and with this there has been a steady progress of geographical science. The Russian Imperial Geographical Society was founded in 1845, and has established branches in all of the outlying parts of the Empire, in the Caucasus, in Siberia, and in Turkestan. "No similar scientific body," an expert authority states, "can show a better record." Russian geographers have not only explored their own empire, but have taken part in the exploration of all the less known regions of the earth, and likewise of the ocean and its depths. The scant justice done to Russia in this matter is due to foreign ignorance and to the modesty of the Russian geographers themselves. In all the branches of geographical science—map-making, with all the mathematical work which it involves, physical geography, ethnology and anthropology, and the collection and classification of statistics—their work is large and excellent. Their names are familiar to their scientific colleagues throughout the world, but are not widely known among the public, and would only be strange here.

It is not surprising that Russia, with its varied geographical features and its mineral wealth, should have at an early date given particular attention to the scientific study of the earth's crust, which forms the subject of geology. Even at the end of the 18th century geological museums and schools of mining had been founded, and at the present time the many geological publications issued in Russia are now a necessary part of every geological library. The names of Chernyshev, Nikitin, Pavlov, Lagusen, and Federov are well known to all students of the science for their admirable work in stratigraphical geology, and in palæontology.

The contributions of Russia are equally great to the kindred science of geodesy, which deals with the size and shape of the earth, and to seismology,

or the theory of earthquakes. To no one does this new science owe more than to Prince Golitsyn, whose researches have extended over many years. By the seismograph of his invention the study of the tremors in the earth can be pursued with a certainty and precision far in advance of anything possible with the older forms of instrument. Unrivalled opportunities for the study of the phenomena of earthquakes are afforded by the provision of a score of earthquake stations in different parts of the Russian Empire.

Among chemists far and away the greatest name of modern times is that of Mendeleyev. By the publication in 1869 of his well-known periodic law of the elements he changed the whole current of thought in the chemical world. In this classical paper not only did he point out that the then known elements were related one to another, but he was able by the discovery of gaps in his scheme to predict the existence and the properties of unknown elements —predictions which have been crowned with success by later discoveries. The name of Mendeleyev will be for ever enrolled with those of Boyle, Lavoisier, and Dalton as one of the founders of chemistry.

## BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE

In the Biological Sciences the Russian savants have achieved a leading position in many branches. Among zoologists Kovalevsky must be ranked with our Francis Balfour as one of the founders of the new science of embryology. His work, with that of Mechnikov, Salensky, Korotnev, and others, finds its place in every zoological text-book. The work of Mechnikov has attained a reputation which extends far outside the immediate circle of zoologists, and has become familiar in some of its aspects to every educated person. His study of the mechanisms of self-protection in the lower animals led him to grasp the essential nature of the process of inflamma-

tion in the higher animals, and to become one of the founders of the modern doctrine of immunity. For the last thirty years, at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, to which he transferred his work from Odessa, he has devoted his whole attention to research into the mechanisms of defence employed by the higher organisms against infection, and his work on this subject has formed one of the chief sources of inspiration to bacteriologists and physicians in all countries.

The zoologist Danilevsky must be regarded as a pioneer in our knowledge of the protozoal parasites of the blood, which have acquired so much importance since they have been shown to be the cause of such diseases as malaria, sleeping sickness, and syphilis. Mention may also be made of the excellent work of Bekhterev, Dogiel, Kulchitsky, Maximov, and others on the microscopic structure of the body.

In physiology Russia may boast of possessing the greatest of living physiologists, Pavlov, who was one of the earliest to receive the Nobel Prize. By the application of Lister's discoveries to physiological technique, he was enabled to throw so much light on the processes of digestion in the higher animals that there is very little of our present knowledge of the subject which we do not owe to him or to his pupils. During the last ten years he has transferred his attentions to the investigations of the functions of the brain. Here again the employment of a new and original method promises to initiate a new era in the study of mental processes.

In botany Russia has produced a series of brilliant workers, among whom Russov in plant-anatomy, Famintsyn, Navashin, and Belayev in embryology and cytology, should be specially mentioned. It is, however, the plant physiologists, Timiryazev and Palladin, whose work has probably had the widest influence on their scientific contemporaries; while

among the younger plant physiologists Lepeshkin is regarded by botanists in this country as one of the most original of the present day.

One of the most important problems both of the theory of plant life, and of practical agriculture and the economics of production, is that of the direct utilisation of atmospheric nitrogen for plant-nutrition, so that nitrogenous manures may be dispensed with. Many soils possess the power of fixing the free nitrogen of the air. But how they did so was a complete mystery until the researches of Vinogradsky explained how it was effected by organisms at work in the soil. In concert with other Russian investigators, Vinogradsky also solved the puzzle of the mode of life of these nitrifying bacteria. This work revealed an entirely unexpected type of physiological life. The research was a model of scientific investigation, and is indeed one of the most brilliant pieces of experimentation in the history of science.

It is worth recording that Timiryazev, besides his work as a scientific investigator and discoverer, has also been a great populariser of science. He did distinguished service not only to the growth of the scientific spirit, but to general culture among the Russian nation, by bringing before them the work and teaching of Darwin. He made science attractive by his gift of exposition and his enthusiasm. His treatise on the physiology of plants for general readers was the first work of the kind brought out in any country ; it has gone through many editions in Russia, and has been translated into English.

The achievements of Russian workers in what we may term the applied sciences, including medicine and surgery, have been purposely omitted. But the record of great men who have sprung up in Russia during the short space of half a century is a striking indication of the reserves of intellectual power possessed by their nation, and points to still greater achievements for humanity in the future.

## III.

Intermediate between the arts of life on the one hand and the pure or applied sciences on the other, are those studies which, while they are concerned with knowledge, not with creation, yet differ from " science " in the usual sense of the word inasmuch as they deal not with the laws and facts of nature, but with those of the moral and mental world and the course of human events. This field includes history, philosophy, economics, and other kindred studies. In it the contribution of Russia to the world is large and is rapidly growing.

## HISTORY

Russian work in history has been seriously hampered in the past by the despotic tradition of Russian government. For the result has been that the best historical students have preferred, for the sake of safety, to deal principally with subjects lying outside the sphere of recent political history. The two chief national histories, by Karamzin and Solovev, fall short of the highest standards of scholarly execution, as that is now understood, but the former is memorable for the effect it had both towards enlarging the sphere of Russian literature and towards creating in the nation a consciousness of its own past. The historical work of Solovev, though great, has its value rather in the application of ideas to history than in the extent and accuracy of its research. But in their own history, original work of first-rate quality, displaying both accuracy and mastery of material, has been produced on particular periods, as, for instance, in Bilbasov's *Catherine II.*, of which the merits and importance have been universally recognised outside Russia, and in the acute studies of Platonov on the 16th and early 17th century. Bogdanovich and several

others have done a great deal of work of the first quality on the Napoleonic period and the national war of 1812. What has been done by Russian historians on subjects external to Russia, where they can work with freedom, shows them to be capable of the greatest achievements.

Byzantine history is intimately connected with that of Russia, and the Russians have made it peculiarly their own. In the field of Byzantine history, philology, archæology, and art Russians have done so much work of capital importance that no serious student of these subjects can afford to be unacquainted with Russian. The leading Byzantinists, of Petrograd or Moscow, Kiev or Kazan, are thoroughly sound scholars, accurate and acute, trained in modern methods, and masters of that difficult but indispensable art, the investigation and appraisement of the sources from which our knowledge of past history is ultimately derived. The names of Vasilevsky, Vasilev, Uspensky, Regel, Shestakov, Kulakovsky, are as familiar to all European students of Byzantine civilisation as, say, the names of Stubbs, Maitland, Bémont, Round, Vinogradov, to students of English institutions.

To English historical studies, Russians, and one Russian in particular, have made contributions of unexampled value. Vinogradov has made little less than a revolution in English history. It was he who first inspired F. W. Maitland to begin his historical work. It was he who, by a combination of good luck and genius, identified Bracton's Note-book, one of the most precious documents which have descended to us from our own national past. His long series of studies on the social life of the Middle Ages is the most important and original contribution which any foreigner, not excepting Pauli or Ranke, has made to English history. A pupil of Vinogradov's, Savin, has given us a most important and thorough study of the economic

consequences of the dissolution of the English monasteries in the 16th century. So, too, one of the best accounts of the condition of rural France before the Revolution is by a Russian historian. The circumstances of their own history, and their actual experience of the life of the Russian village commune, give Russians a peculiar advantage in dealing with the rural life and agrarian problems of past ages.

But more generally, for historians in the west of Europe it is becoming more and more necessary to know Russian, and the archives of the Russian Historical Society are now an indispensable part of any historian's library. The modern generation of Russian historians have fully mastered the scientific method, and are ready to develop a great national school. Scholarship is here reinforced by national character; for a nation that can produce such a book as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* has shown evidence of the highest natural gift of historical imagination.

## PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY

In the field of abstract thought, Russia has not founded great schools, nor is it known by great names like those of Kant and Hegel, of Locke and Hume; yet the Russian genius has here also made important contributions: Chomiakov and Aksakov developed a philosophy of Russian history, and in psychology, the researches of Bekhterev, among others, have obtained wide recognition. The Russian names which stand highest in this field are those of Solovev, Lavrov, and Mikhailovsky.

Solovev has been already mentioned as a distinguished historian, and was also a critic and poet. He was a brilliant writer, as well as an original thinker who was in many respects in advance of his time. His vein of religious thought, with its

tendency towards mysticism, is characteristically Russian. In him, as in other writers, may be noted a tendency of the Russian nature to make philosophic thought concrete, to give it an immediate social or religious bearing, and to apply it directly to the problems of life. Thus Mikhailovsky is notable for his work in opposing and confuting that doctrine of the "struggle for existence," as applied to the moral world, on which Treitschke built his famous theories. The teaching of these thinkers insists before all things on duty; it defines progress as the increase of human happiness, and patriotism as the desire for this progress; and it affirms that the happiness of a people cannot be founded on the unhappiness of any other people.

The study of economics and sociology is one into which the educated class in Russia has, for three-quarters of a century or more, thrown itself with the utmost eagerness. It has been urged to this both by social environment and by natural bent. For the Russian mind is singularly quick and receptive, and its courage in following out arguments to their logical conclusion is even greater than that of the French, and perhaps only equalled by that of the ancient Greeks; and the conditions of a country which has changed so swiftly, and in which economic and social questions have presented themselves on so large a scale, have led to a wide study of social and economic problems.

Russians have devoured and assimilated all the theories and systems of the West, independent of the country of their origin—those of Comte, Herbert Spencer, or Marx; and they have added to them many of their own. They have also made, and are making, large contributions to the collection and systematisation of facts. Plechanov has a European reputation as a writer on sociology. Chuprov, Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky are among the names familiar to economic students. There is a whole

library of Russian works on the economics of agriculture; another on the economics of credit and finance; and a third on wages, co-operation, and the labour question. In these studies, indeed, Russia holds one of the foremost places.

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These are facts. They are, as has been said, professedly incomplete; they do not even in rapid summary cover the whole ground; but they do not go beyond, rather they fall short of, what can be tested and verified. Every reader can draw from them his own conclusions. But the broad facts ought to be known, and they must be taken into account if we are to understand what Russia is and what our relations to Russia, our feelings towards Russia, ought to be. They are not set forth here to prove a theory, or to support a political alliance. Still less are they set forth to place Russia in an artificial light. The object of stating them is to remove an artificial darkness.

This statement therefore does not touch on the political side of the Russian question and its bearing upon our relations with the Russian Government and people. It does not, indeed, desire to conceal or to minimise the faults of the Russian Government towards its own people or towards subject races and nationalities. In these matters, as in many more, Russia is at a stage which other countries have gone through, and which others again possibly have not yet reached, for who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about? When we think of the dark history of England a hundred years ago, with its widespread distress and bitter discontent met by high-handed repression, with its dispersals of peaceful meetings by armed force, with its savage political prosecutions, and its sentences of death or exile on political reformers, or when we look back still further to the darker pages in the history of our rule of Ireland, we may

still remember that in those very times England stood high in the world, not only through the fame of her writers and thinkers and artists and men of science, but as a mother of freedom. She was full of faults, and was doing great and good work in spite of them.

Nevertheless these facts show one thing clearly, and suggest another.

What they show is, that the gift of Russia to the world is great. In 1836 a Russian author said despairingly that "we have given nothing to the world; we must begin over again." They began over again. They have done what deserves admiration and gratitude, what helps other nations and gives them hope.

What they suggest, and what is borne out the more one takes pains to know more of them, is an affinity, not less marked because of certain strong contrasts, between the Russian nation and our own.

The idea of nationality is one of the most potent in modern life. When we ask, What is a nation? the answer is that it is not a matter of blood, for nearly all nations consist of mixed races, nor is it a matter of language, which is often an accident. In most nations different languages are spoken, and there are separate nations, like the United States and ourselves, which speak the same language. Nationality lies in the consciousness of kinship and of mutual understanding, in the same habits of thought and life, in common memories of the past, and in common hopes for the future. Each nation has in this sense an individuality; each nation is a person, a member of the family of nations. It is of the essence of the family that each member of it is different from the others. Each has a different sphere of work and of duty, and each can help or, if unhappily it should be so, each can hinder the rest.

Through ignorance and through prejudice, this kinship has not been properly realised. The failure

to realise it has made friendship with Russia not quite popular in England, and subject to an uneasy suspicion. It may help to dispel this uncomfortable feeling when we understand that the Russians are not only a united nation, not only a race of strong, simple, and profoundly religious people, but that they seek after and have produced for themselves and for us large treasures of truth and beauty.

There is a stimulus to friendship in differences as well as in likenesses, where each friend supplies the defect of the other; and thus the outstanding differences no less than the essential affinities of Russia and England are worth thinking over. Russia is really one of the younger nations. She is more of a child than England or France or Germany. Like a child, she is overflowing with understanding and sympathy, but she is not what grown-up people call practical. The Russian character is very sensitive, and with its sensitiveness there is a certain lack of hard fibre. According to universal testimony the Russian nature is humane and kindly beyond that of most Western nations. It has cultivated, by native instinct, and under the pressure of historical circumstances, the virtues of patience and resignation to a degree which amounts to a weakness, if a beautiful weakness. Like a child, it bears no grudge, but it is easily discouraged, because it has not yet "found itself." There is in Russian character a lack of initiative and of the virtue (if it be a virtue) known as "hustle."

Yet Russians are capable of doing, as well as of suffering, anything when their heart is in it. It should be borne in mind, too, that among the educated class of Russia, who have been open to foreign influence, the intellectual and moral diseases of Western Europe have taken with extreme violence. This has been the weakness of their educated class. Much of what makes Russia unsympathetic to us is due to this exceedingly academic or book-ridden

class, who have been fed on Western literature of the most extreme type in religion, politics, and morals. They talk the loudest, but it would be a mistake to think that theirs is the real voice of Russia.

Both England and Russia are in the throes of a social and industrial revolution. But they are at different stages of it. This is why it is so useful to think of modern Russia by comparison with the England of a hundred years ago; for in both we have a time of deep ferment and discontent throughout the whole nation among those who have lost their old anchorage, both as regards thought and as regards the structure of social life. The first Duma, from which so much was hoped, was wrecked, not on what we should call questions of politics in the ordinary sense, that is to say, on questions of government, but on the question of land tenure. We should remember, in our own history, the machinery riots, the Chartist movement, and the disappointment which followed the extravagant hopes raised by the first Reform Act.

Both England and Russia have a strong sense of patriotism, a deep love of their own country, and a sense of national and imperial unity. Both are at bottom pious, simple, kindly, and lovers of peace. Even in the old Russian epic poems and tales the heroes are defenders, not conquerors, and the life of the agriculturist, rather than of the warrior, is glorified. Both are possessed by a wakening thirst for knowledge. The desire for knowledge is spreading in Russia with great rapidity. It will be immensely accelerated by the two great reforms of recent years—the enlarged freedom given to the press (it is still very incomplete, but the principle has been conceded), and the system of universal education (the bodies corresponding to our County Councils providing the schools, and the State paying the salaries of teachers), which has been framed and has begun to be carried into effect. But even

now a fact like this is very significant. In the year 1912 a firm of publishers in Moscow sold no less than 6,000,000 of little books or tracts for working men and women in town and country. They were sold at a price which brought them within the reach of the poorest classes. Most of them cost a farthing; the more expensive ran up to as high a figure as twopence halfpenny. Besides being extremely cheap, they were extremely simple; their matter consisted on the one hand of Bible stories, tales, and tracts inculcating the love of children and of animals; on the other hand of practical advice on matters of daily life, on manuring, fruit growing, household management, and the like. And among these little books many were translations from the English. This, too, shows how the two nations can give and do give mutual help to one another; for Tolstoy's beautiful short stories and tracts are also widely read, though not so widely as they deserve to be, in our own country.

English books are great favourites in Russia, and they are becoming more so now that they can be more freely read since the relaxation of the censorship with its many absurdities in working. Russians seem to understand the English way of looking at things more easily and more completely than any other Continental nation does. Dickens is a special favourite with them. Tolstoy cites Dickens as an example of what he considers the highest art, "flowing from love to God and man." They find in him what they want, and also he gives what, on the whole, they themselves lack in two matters. They find in him the abounding sense of fun which is rare in the more dreamy and resigned Russian temperament, and they find in him also the force of will, the driving power, which made him not only fight against injustice but bring about actual reforms. It is interesting to compare Pomyalovsky's descriptions of the misery of his school life with those

of Dickens, but where the Russian suffered and despaired the Englishman suffered and acted. The reforms wrought, for instance, in our police courts, in our boarding schools, and in our educational system are directly due in a very large measure to the effect produced by *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Hard Times*.

The craze for foreign things which went so far to spoil the early efforts of the Russian people towards growth and self-realisation began to give place, about the middle of last century, to the notion of a regenerative mission. They were seized by the idea that they were an elect nation which should reconcile the failure of other nations and be a constructive power for the whole world. This was the idea which lay at the base of the Slavophil movement, and gave it the moral force which lay behind it as a merely racial or political movement. It was in pointed opposition to the Western notion, not yet extinct, that Russia was a blank sheet.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Russia regarded herself as the inheritor of the Roman Empire. Moscow was the "third Rome." Homyakov, some sixty or seventy years ago, expanded this doctrine into one which has been since then one of the great motives or generative ideas in the world, that of a historical continuity by which the world-mission of Greece had passed to Russia through Byzantium. He emphasised the simplicity and love of peace which characterised Russian life. He claimed that "if there be a brotherhood of nations, moral supremacy does not belong to Germany, with her military and aristocratic ideals, but to the plebeian and agricultural Slavs." In the Russian character he discerned what he found to be a "fountain of living water" only held back by the national apathy and timidity. This feeling is expressed in his celebrated prayer for Russia, written in the album of the musician Glinka :—

"Do not grant her selfish peace,
Do not send her blind arrogance;
The spirit of death, the spirit of doubt,
Let them be extinguished in the spiritual life."

As a theory based on actual facts, this doctrine of continuity between Greece and Russia would not be accepted by historians. But it is a doctrine which has been of the greatest importance, like other unverified doctrines or theories, in its influence, through the minds of those who accepted it, upon the course of modern history. And the regenerative mission of Russia may well pass from a dream into a fact when the self-regeneration which we now see in progress has been really effected.

The ideals of mankind as they were defined by the French Revolution are liberty, equality, and fraternity. It has been said, and said with great truth, that of the three, liberty has been fought for and won in England, but equality and fraternity are much more fully attained in Russia. They have not got liberty, at least in the political sense of the word, because they have not greatly desired it. Is not the converse true of ourselves, that we have not got equality and fraternity, because we have not greatly desired them?

But the lack of discipline which is noted by observers of Russian life really comes of a sort of excess of individual liberty in matters apart from politics. The general Russian attitude with regard to government is very much like that of Dr. Johnson in our own country. "I would not give half-a-guinea to live under one form of government rather than another"; "All governments are alike"; "Political liberty is good only so far as it produces private liberty." These are bold paradoxes; but like all Johnson's sweeping sayings, they have a basis of strong common sense. And in these sayings there is at least so much truth as this, that the failure of the Russian political reformers was because

they were quite out of touch with the Russian people, both the agricultural peasant and the industrial working man. Love is the most potent spring of action, and the reformers did not arouse the love of the people by their own love for the people.

It must be clear from the facts which have been here summarised that talk such as may sometimes be heard even in England, of "the barbarous East at the gates of Europe" and the danger of an "avalanche of multitudinous savagery," is either wilful falsehood or ignorance so gross as to be equally dangerous. Ignorance is mischievous as well as foolish. Falsehood is a deeper evil than absence of political freedom. The English nation by instinct, tradition, and moral sense loves freedom; but it also desires knowledge and loves truth.

The last century has witnessed more than one national regeneration. The regeneration of Germany, which began little more than a century ago, bore fruit in the German Empire, in the achievements of Germany in science, thought, and literature, and in the consciousness throughout all the German people of a high position and of a great future. The regeneration of Italy, slowly wrought out through crushing difficulties and multiplied failures by the genius of men like Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi, supported by a spirit working among the whole Italian nation, has restored Italy to the place which for many centuries she had lost, and made her now one of the great civilised nations of the world. The regeneration of France under the third Republic may be judged not only from the growth among the French people of science, of industry, and of social reform, but still more from the steady and resolved patriotism with which they are facing the present crisis. The regeneration of Russia is the last and greatest of all. Russia started later in the race, but she is now in the full movement of a common progress. She is taking our gifts, and giving her own.

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